Granite Horse Landscape Management Project
EA #OR110-99-28

EA Addendum #1
T34S,R5W, Sec 2, 29 Access
July 18, 2002

I. Introduction and Background

This EA addendum expands upon the proposed road and transportation actions (EA, p. 16) as they pertain to access into Sections 20 and 29, T34S, R5W. It provides additional assessment of the potential environmental effects of this expanded proposal.

II. Additional Proposed Action

A. Need for the Proposal

The BLM does not currently have legal road access into BLM lands (approximately 1,200 acres) in the Horse Creek drainage: T34S, R5W, Sections 20 (portions of W1/2), 29 (portion of W1/2), and 30 (E1/2). This precludes conventional ground based timber harvesting in the southern portions of sections 20 and 29 and the eastern half of Section 30. At present, all BLM visits to these parcels require long walks from the existing BLM road systems on the Grave Creek side to the north, or from the county road in the Shorthorn Creek area to the west, or from the power line maintenance road to the east.

Historically, BLM land in this area was accessed from the south through Section 29 by crossing Portola Lumber Company land. Portola Lumber Company has sold their land in portions of section 19, 20 and 29 and the new ownership is split between two parties. The new land owner of the southern portion (E1/2SW1/4) has blocked access across their land thereby excluding both the BLM and Baxter Timber Company from accessing their ownerships to the north.

The purpose of the proposed action addressed in this addendum is to gain legal road access to BLM lands to facilitate forest management activities. This includes providing access for helicopter logging as proposed for the Granite Horse project. These landings would be located, in part, on Baxter Timber company land in Section 20.

The BLM's purpose and need is complemented by Baxter's application for a road right-of-way to use the road being addressed in this addendum.

B. Scoping Issues Relevant to the Proposal

Several issues were raised during the scoping phase of developing the current proposal:

-- The historically used Horse Creek road on the west side of the power line is highly eroded and lies within the riparian reserve of Horse Creek. Stream crossings are washed out. The road originates on private property and the new owner has recently blocked access over this road.

-- Extensive off highway vehicle (OHV) use occurs in the Horse Creek area. This has resulted in extensive erosion.

C. Description of the Proposed Action

1. Easement / ROW agreement

The proposed action is to obtain an easement from Baxter Lumber Company to cross their owner ship in Sections 19 (E1/2SE1/4), 20 (W1/2SW1/4), and 29 (NE1/4NW1/4), T35S,R5W (See Map #1) and to build a new road as shown on Map #1. A right-of-way agreement would be executed with Baxter to allow them use of this road.

2. Road design / construction

Map #1 indicates the proposed route for the new road. Gates would be installed at the intersection of the new construction with Road # 34-5-29 (See Map #1) and at the north end of the power line road in Section 20.

The road design would be a road subgrade of approximately 17' with a 14' running surface with an additional 5' for curve widening. The grade would be rolled to provide for natural drainage. Approximately five 18" cross drains would be installed and drainage dips would be constructed to provide an adequate road drainage. The road surfacing would be left as a natural surface with some spot rocking as needed.

Where the road crosses the high pressure natural gas line (see Map 1), a minimum depth of two feet of crushed aggregate would be added over a layer of geotextile to improve bearing strength to protect the pipeline.

The proposed stream crossing on BLM land in Section 20 (SE1/4SW1/4) (See Map #1) would be provided by installing a 42" corrugated metal pipe (CMP) approximately 40' in length. This culvert is sized to accommodate the estimated 100 year flow level. Fill material from adjacent road work would be utilized as cover for the new culvert. Hay bales barriers would be used to filter sediment from runoff water. The road would be rocked for 100' on each side of the crossing.

The stream/draw crossing on Baxter land in Section 20 would involve the installation of an 18" CMP (see Map #1). Seepage from the spring adjacent to the road would be directed along a roadside drainage ditch to keep it from crossing the road. The road side ditch through the seepage area would be lined with rip rap. Soft areas of the road surface would be spot rocked as needed.

3. Road Decommissioning (T34S, R5W, Section 20)

All entrances to existing roads on BLM land in T34S, R5, Section 20 not utilized in the Granite Horse project would have the initial 15 feet obliterated. Additionally, all other roads that are no longer needed on BLM land in sections 20 and 29 would be obliterated. Road obliteration would include pulling back the road fill to mimic, as close as possible, the natural land form. Where this is not possible, the roadway would be obliterated so as to preclude vehicle access. (Tank traps or gates previously installed in the area have not been effective at restricting OHV activity and are not considered suitable alternatives to obliteration.) The existing road in the riparian reserve area of Horse Creek (Sections 20 and 29) would be decommissioned. The existing power line road would not be obliterated as its continued use is needed by the power company.

4. Project Design Features

Th following project design features (PDFs) are included for the purpose of reducing potential adverse environmental impacts:

– Where the road crosses drainages, it will surfaced with 8" of 1.5" minus for 100' on each side of the drainage.

– All helicopter landings will be located outside of riparian reserves.

– Road fill draw slopes (inner gorge) on both sides of the intermittent stream would be mulched and seeded.

– Road use would be seasonally restricted per Table 2-3 in the EA.

III. Environmental Consequences

A. Introduction

The historic Horse Creek road was originally constructed in the early 1900's for mining. The stream bed of Horse Creek itself was hydraulically mined and the road now goes in and out of the streambed. The road is located within the riparian reserve area for the entire 1/4 mile segment within BLM property. There is also a washed out stream crossing on the BLM land.

B. Resource: Soils and Water

1. Affected Environment

The project area is in the Upper Jumpoff Joe Creek 6th Field Watershed. Horse Creek is a tributary stream to Jumpoff Joe Creek. Soils on the new and existing road route west of the power line include Cornutt-Dubakella on steep slopes (35-55% south slopes). Dubakella, with its clayey subsoil, is susceptible to disturbance/compaction (due to high seasonal moisture content just above the subsoil that limits bearing capacity) and has limited productivity (low calcium to magnesium ratio). When combined with Cornutt it can be susceptible to mass movement, sliding and slumping. Soils in the power line easement and along the new road route east of the power line are Jumpoff Joe with Jumpoff clay loam (49E) on moderate slopes (20-35%). Jumpoff is deep, well drained, clay loam over clay. The underlying clay occurs at depths greater than 15 inches and is slowly permeable.

There is currently a primitive road crossing on upper Horse Creek on private land in E1/2SW1/4 Section 29 which is eroding and introducing sediment into Horse Creek. Horse Creek in Section 29 below this site has been subject to heavy erosion and sedimentation due to OHV use adjacent to and through the creek.

Jumpoff Joe Creek is a 303(d) listed stream rated as "Water Quality Limited" because of warm summer temperatures.

2. Environmental Consequences

a) Alternative 1: No Action Alternative

Erosion / sedimentation will continue at the existing upper Horse Creek crossing. Erosion / sedimentation will continue in the area down stream that has been subject to OHV use. OHV use and resultant erosion should diminish with time because access has been restricted by the property owner downstream from the heavily eroded area (roughly 0.75 mile of stream and riparian zone).

b) Alternative 2: Proposed Action

This alternative will provide access for Baxter and the BLM to lands that have recently lost their historic access route. The BLM portion of the old road and damaged land that resulted from its use (about half of the total amount) will be restored (combinations of decommissioning, recontoured, seeded, mulched) thereby reducing rates of erosion sedimentation down to natural levels.

Effects would include a slight short term, local increase of erosion/sedimentation in and adjacent to the intermittent tributary to Horse Creek. This would last an estimated three years or less. Erosion / sedimentation at the upper Horse Creek crossing would increase slightly or remain the same as

currently. It would then drop below the existing after an estimated three years or less. The net effect of the new route and construction would be a very small short term increase in erosion / sedimentation with a long term decrease erosion/sedimentation. These estimates of impacts do not include any of the environmental benefits expected to result from the road decommissioning / restoration work on BLM land in Sections 29 and 20. If the proposed measures directed at reducing the level of OHV activity in the area are not effective, then the indicated improvement in the soil and water condition would not be realized.

The above applies to cumulative effects. If OHV activity is reduced, there will be a net overall reduction in sediment production from OHV disturbed areas. The new road will replace the old road that has been used by OHV's. Therefore erosion/sedimentation and any peak flow increases caused by roads would diminish. However, if OHV activity is not reduced, soil disturbance levels will continue to be high or will increase and erosion/sedimentation and peak flows will increase in Horse Creek as result of this project.

C. Resource: Fisheries

1. Affected Environment

The project area is in the Upper Jumpoff Joe Creek 6th Field sub-watershed, adjacent to Horse Creek, which is a tributary to Jumpoff Joe Creek. Jumpoff Joe Creek is a 303(d) listed stream rated as "Water Quality Limited" because of warm summer temperatures. The Oregon DEQ water quality standard is 64°F. for the summer maximum seven-day average. Chinook and coho salmon, and steelhead trout are limited to the lower reaches of Jumpoff Joe Creek, approximately 4 miles downstream of the project area. Resident cutthroat trout and sculpin are present in perennial Horse Creek. The two tributaries of Horse Creek where culvert placements are proposed are intermittent and do not support fish.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) has identified fish habitat benchmarks. The benchmarks are used to determine if a component of fish habitat is a limiting factor in trout or salmon production or survival. In Horse Creek, large woody debris levels, pool depth and frequency, water flow and temperature, substrate, and riparian condition have been identified in BLM surveys as limiting for salmon and trout production and survival.

2. Environmental Consequences

a) Alternative 1: No Action Alternative

The no action alternative would preclude proposed road actions on Horse Creek. Road construction, maintenance, gating, and decommissioning would not be done.

The existing roads running adjacent to Horse Creek in Sections 20 and 29 currently produce a continual sediment delivery and accumulation in the creek. The no action alternative will cause major short and long term adverse impacts to fish. It will allow excessive sediment delivery to streams to continue for several years. The downstream effect would be a reduction in survival and production of salmonids. Excessive sediment delivery will suffocate eggs in the gravels and cause a direct mortality. Additionally, excessive sediment delivery will produce indirect mortality to juvenile fish. Adult fish will also have migration and spawning impaired.

b) Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The proposed action alternative includes road activities on Horse Creek. Two gates would be constructed on roads currently providing access to Horse Creek from BLM land. Approximately 0.5 mile of road would be constructed on BLM and private land, including placement of a 42" culvert at a crossing of an intermittent tributary to Horse Creek. An additional 18" culvert would be installed where an existing private road crosses another intermittent Horse Creek tributary. Decommissioning with additional restorative measures would be done on a degraded road which runs along the west side of Horse Creek through BLM land.

Sediment delivered to Horse Creek would be primarily as a result of the installation of two culverts on the intermittent tributaries. This sediment input would be unlikely to cause more than highly localized, negligible, short term adverse impacts at the project level (7th field scale). The minimal increase of sediment delivery produced from these proposed actions is not expected to appreciably affect the survival or production of salmonids. It is anticipated that the long term beneficial effects will maintain downstream salmon survival and production and far outweigh any short term adverse effects. The reduction in sediment delivery predicted as a result of the road improvements and decommissioning will aid egg and juvenile fish survival because the risk of egg suffocation will be lower. The risk of direct or latent mortality to juvenile fish from sediment delivery is substantially minimized when compared to the no action alternative. These effects are inclusive for direct and indirect adverse and beneficial effects to fish.

There will be a substantial long term reduction of sediment resulting in a beneficial effect for the aquatic resources. Installation of gates will reduce vehicle traffic, except for occasional motorcycle, mountain bike, and ATV use. Culverts installed on the new road and the existing private road would be sized according to 100-year flood criteria and would not impede flows. Road decommissioning will not affect the floodplain connectivity because riparian reserves will be maintained and stream channels will not be altered.

Effects to Coho and Essential Fish Habitat - The proposed action alternative would have no effect on coho, coho critical habitat or Essential Fish Habitat for coho and chinook salmon. These species and their habitats are not present within the project area. The impacts of the proposed actions would not be transferred to these species and their habitats, which are located approximately 4 miles

downstream of the project site.

D. Resource: Wildlife

1. Affected Environment.

The proposed ROW would pass through two habitat types: oak woodlands on the east side of Horse Creek and a coniferous forest stands on the west side. The oak woodlands provide suitable winter range and fawning/calving area for deer and elk as well as foraging habitat for Great grey owls. Forest stands on the west side of the draw provide suitable roosting/foraging habitat for the Northern spotted owl and nesting habitat for Great grey owls. This area also provides habitat for Red tree voles.

Wildlife surveys were conducted during the spring of 2001, the 2001-2002 winter and the spring of 2002. The proposed ROW and surrounding areas were systematically surveyed according to requirements of the Northwest Forest Plan and Endangered Species Act. The findings are summarized as followings:

- The Northern Spotted Owl is currently listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (1973). There are a no known Northern spotted owls sites or unsurveyed habitat in the ROW area. The nearest known spotted owl site is located approximately 3.5 miles east of the ROW area. The ROW passes through a small portion of NSO habitat in Section 20 at the west property line.

- The bald eagle is currently listed as threatened under the ESA (1973). The nearest known bald eagle location is approximately 13 miles from the proposed action area. No nesting habitat would be removed by the proposed ROW action. There are no adverse impacts to this species anticipated to arise from the proposed action.

- The red tree vole is a Survey and Manage (S&M) species under the Northwest Forest Plan (1994). Surveys were conducted during the winter of 2001-2002 and spring of 2002 with climbing for nest verification completed during the spring of 2002. Red tree voles were not located during the survey.

- There are two S&M mollusc species in the Grants Pass resource area. The project area was surveyed for these mollusc species during the winter/spring of 2001. None were found.

- Surveys for Great grey owls (a S&M species) were in 2000 and 2001. Great greys were not located in the project area.

2. Environmental Consequences

a) Alternative 1: No Action

Under the no action alternative the ROW would not be granted, the road would not be built, and the "old" road paralleling Horse creek would not be decommissioned. This road would continue to deliver sediment to Horse creek, a creek which provides habitat for species such as the Foothill Yellow-legged frog (*Rana boylii*). The area would remain readily accessible to OHV use and the value of the deer/elk winter range located in the project area would remain low due to disturbance. The forested habitat west of the draw would continue to provide habitat for the Northern spotted owl.

b) Alternative 2: Proposed Action

Approximately ½ mile of new road would be constructed across BLM land and an additional approximately 1/4 mile of the power line road would be reconstructed. The construction and reconstruction would pass through oak woodlands east of the draw and through forested habitat west of the draw. Gates would reduce some of the OHV use of the area and seasonal limitations on the road would be implemented. This would allow for the winter range and calving/fawning habitat to function at a higher level then it currently does benefitting these two species.

The proposed decommissioning of ½ mile of the "old" road paralleling the Horse Creek would benefit a variety of wildlife species. The location of the road is within a riparian corridor heavily used by deer, elk, bobcat and cougar. Closing the road would prevent vehicles from driving across Horse creek, and driving within the riparian reserve. Vehicle disturbance to the area would cease. The area would revegetate providing more secure habitat.

Construction of the proposed road would adversely affect a small (<2 acres) amount of Northern spotted owl habitat through habitat modification and disturbance. This area has undergone formal consultation with the USFWS as a part of the Granite Horse project. Their Biological Opinion concludes that the impacts of the Granite Horse project will not jeopardize the continued existence of the owl.

E. Resource: Botany

1. Affected Environment

Three populations of *Camassia howellii* (a Bureau sensitive species) are located within the proposed right-of-way. *Camassia howellii* does occur in many locations throughout the Granite Horse project area. Its range is very narrow, mainly stretching from Grants Pass north to the Grave Creek drainage and west to the Picket Snake drainage. In T34S-R5W-20, nine populations occur. When surveyed in 1996, an estimate of over 10,000 individuals were documented. Populations were recorded as being in poor health, though, due to heavy impacts from off highway vehicle (OHV) trespass. The three populations to be affected are found within forest openings with no evidence of trespass.

2. Environmental Consequences

a) Alternative 1: No Action

OHV use levels are anticipated to remain similar to current levels. Populations will still be high in number, but will continue to have some impacts depending on the effectiveness of private landowner's barricades.

b) Alternative 2: Proposed Action

At least 200 plants would be impacted either directly through obliteration or indirectly from reduction in population size. Equipment placement and soil piling during construction as well as future roadside could indirectly affect these populations. Persistence of the three populations will be compromised.

As planned, the new road will be gated and another access point from the south will be blocked. New fencing has also been installed in the vicinity of the road by a private property owner. While this may reduce some OHV use, it is very difficult to preclude OHV activity, especially in relatively flat terrain.

Star thistle is growing densely in the vicinity of the right-of-way along the power line road. Effects from road construction will most likely include expansion of this state listed noxious weed into a larger area than the current approximately 4,000 square feet area.

Cumulative Effects - Future road construction and increased OHV use are reasonable foreseeable actions in the project area and within the narrow range of this plant species and which would potentially impact the plant populations. Because the species population numbers are relatively high within its range, the likelihood of its persistence being threatened is slight. Individual populations could be impacted though, where populations are small.

F. Resource: Recreation, Cultural and Visual

1. Affected environment

The proposed road passes near the Horse Creek Placer Mine (recorded site), which includes placer workings along Horse Creek, hydraulic mining ditches, trench cuts and a can dump. There is also evidence of past chrome mining in the area and also the Sexton to Grants Pass telephone line.

The area is currently used by off highway vehicles (OHVs), especially along the power line road. The private landowner to the south in section 29 has gated and fenced their property, but the power line is still accessible from the north in section 20.

2. Environmental Consequences

a) Alternative 1: No action

There would be no affect to any mining features or other historic sites. The features/sites would remain as is, with no disturbance near the sites. OHV activity would continue to occur along the power line with access from the north part of section 20.

b) Alternative 2: Proposed action

The proposed road would cross one small mining ditch. The ditch is shallow and a fairly indistinct feature on the landscape. The Horse Creek Placer is located to the north of the proposed road, and would not be affected by the proposed action. The Sexton to GP telephone line would also not be affected by the proposed action.

The new road construction could result in more areas being impacted by OHV activities. The construction of the two gates (at the intersection of the new road and road 34-5-29 and at the north end of the power line road) would keep out four wheel drive vehicles. Motorcycles and quads would, however, be able to access the new road and power line area by going around the gates.

G. Forest Management and Harvest / Logging Systems

1) Affected Environment

Past logging on BLM land in the upper Horse creek and Shorthorn creek area has been limited by relatively young stand ages and poor road access. Consequently, BLM road development has not been a priority in this area in the past 30 years.

There are presently no landings available in the center of the proposed Granite Horse timber sale where it is located in Sections 20 and 29. All the proposed landings are on the periphery of sale area. The proposed helicopter landing locations described in the Granite Horse EA are also restricted by power lines along the East side of Horse Creek.

2) Environmental Consequences

a) Alternative 1: No Action

The No Action alternative would maintain the current access - no legal and very limited vehicular access into the BLM lands of the project area. This restricts logging activity to helicopter yarding and, with no landings in the center of activity, there will be long flight times per turn (log load). Due to the high cost of helicopter flight time (estimates range up to $2,000 per hour), consequent logging costs are very high and, potentially, rendering the timber sale a deficit sale.

b) Alternatives 2: Proposed Action

This R/W easement provides an opportunity fo more advantageous landing locations for the timber sale and, in the long term, much better administrative access to the associated BLM lands. It decreases the turn time for a large portion of the harvest units and would be significant in reducing overall logging costs.

APPENDIX A
Issues Considered But Eliminated From Further Discussion

The following issues and alternatives were considered during project planning but were eliminated as noted:

1) Accessing the area from the north via the power line in Section 20 (E1/2W1/2) was evaluated as a potential route. This alternative was eliminated because there are road grades as great as 30% which results in unacceptable truck hauling conditions..

2) A more extensive road system development was considered during the planning of the Granite Horse project. This was eliminated because a more extensive BLM road system in the upper Horse Creek area would contradict the planning team's desire to reduce road density, reduce OHV activity in sensitive plant areas and to protect the wildlife refuge value of the area. There was also a concern that the acquisition of the necessary easements across private property would be prohibitively might prove to be unavailable or too expensive. These concerns led to a proposal to use helicopter rather than ground based logging as the primary logging system in the Horse Creek and Shorthorn Creek watersheds.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MEDFORD DISTRICT

EA Addendum - T34S,R5W, Sec 2, 29 Access
T35S, R5W, Sections 20, 29, 30
July 2002

EA COVER SHEET

RESOURCE AREA: Grants Pass Resource Area EA # OR-110-99-28

ACTION/TITLE: Granite Horse Landscape Management Project

LOCATION: T34S, R5W, Sections 15, 19, 20, 21, 29, 30, 31; T34S,R6W, Sections 22, 23, 26; T35S,R5W, Sections 03, 04, 05, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 29, 31, 33, 34; T35S, R6W, Sections 12, 13

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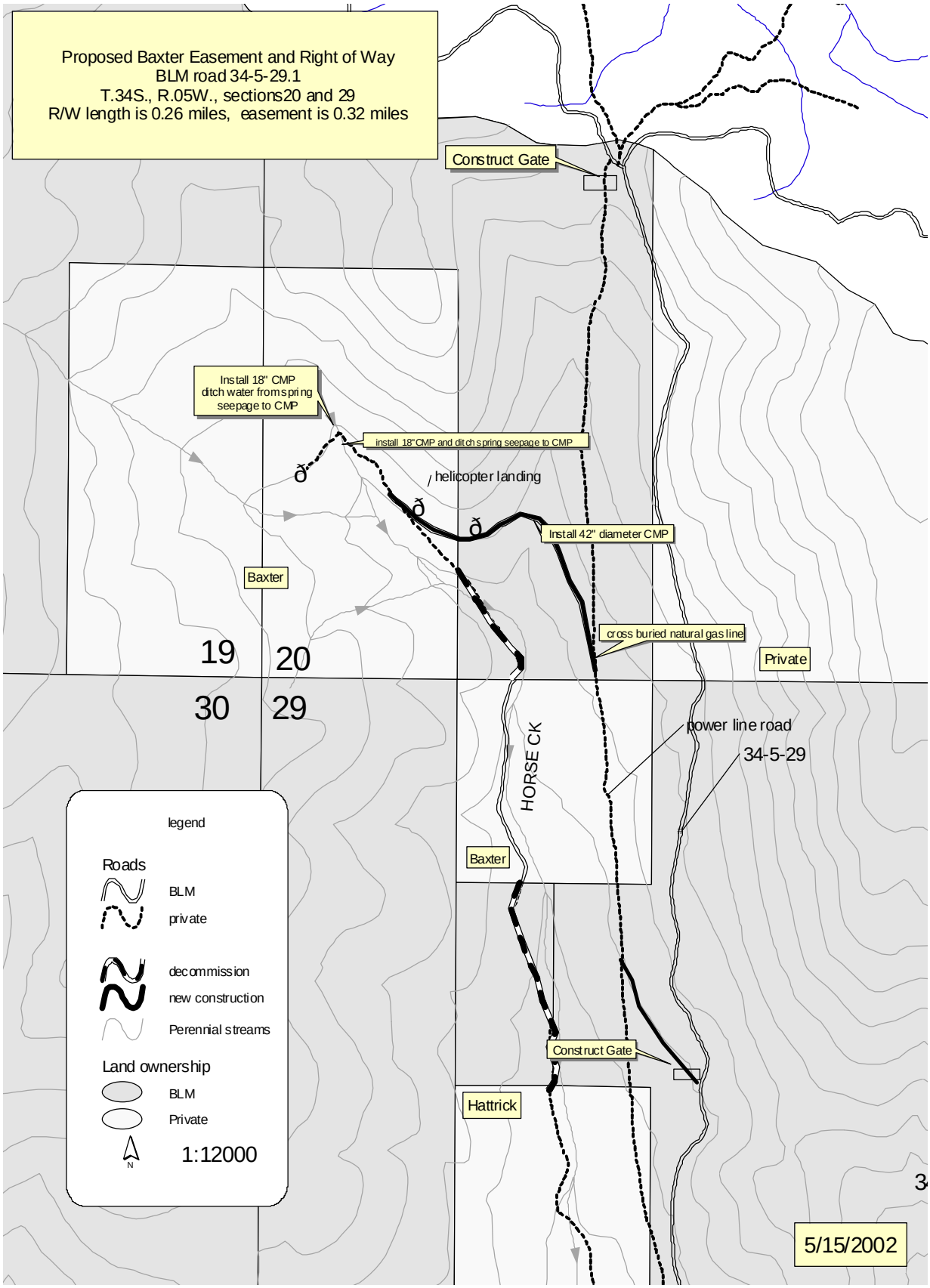
Proposed Baxter Easement and Right of Way
BLM road 34-5-29.1
T.34S., R.05W., sections20 and 29
R/W length is 0.26 miles, easement is 0.32 miles
Construct Gate
Install 18" CMP ditch water from spring seepage to CMP
install 18"CMP and ditch spring seepage to CMP
helicopter landing
Install 42" diameter CMP
Baxter
cross buried natural gas line
Private
19
20
30
29
HORSE CK
power line road
34-5-29
Baxter
Construct Gate
Hattrick
legend
Roads
BLM
private
decommission
new construction
Perennial streams
Land ownership
BLM
Private
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5/15/2002